



Parashat HaShavuah

בְּשַׁלַּח

Shemot (Exodus)

13:17-17:16 Beshalach

(When He Sent)

Understanding the Parsha

Exodus 13:17 – 17:16

We will Learn how to

- 1) interpret the main theme (subject) of a Parsha (weekly reading from the Torah),
- 2) make thematic connections to that Parsha (study the Scriptures related by a common theme [subject], line upon line and precept upon precept)
- 3) learn how to gain greater understanding of the Parsha we are looking at through its thematic connections to other portions of Scripture.

Understanding the Teachings From the Story of the Battle With Amalek

I. **Read Exodus 17:8 - 17:13** — In order for you to find out the overall theme of a passage, it's good to write an outline of it and then study the topics of the outline first. After reading the passage, fill in the spaces to complete the outline below:

- Exodus 17:8-10 — _____ and preparations for _____
Amalek attacks Israel war
- Exodus 17:11-13 — _____
The battle
- Exodus 17:14-16 — The _____ of the _____
outcome battle

I. If you remember from our lessons before, in Genesis, many stories in Scripture can be divided into three or more equally divided sections, called **chiastic structures**. Remember, a **chiastic structure** is a pattern

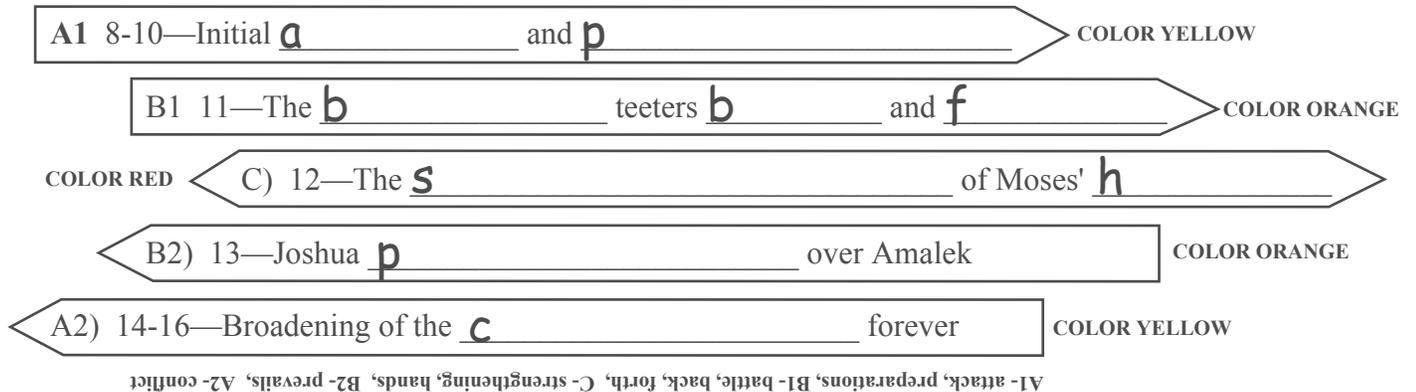
organized like this. Usually, a story is divided into two halves. The themes of the first half of the story are repeated in the second half of the story in reverse order. And, the first and second halves of the story usually point us to the most important part of the story, **the central axis**.

Here is an example below:



Let's divide the story we just read into these halves ourselves:

Write in the themes below and then color your the structure using the colors indicated:



Great coloring! now, let's take a thematic look at this structure a few different ways.

A. Looking at both Halves of the Story

1. When we compare the A sections, we see that in the first half of the story, it is **Amalek** who starts up the battle with Israel. In the second half of the story, it is **Adonai** who starts up battles with Amalek for all time.
2. When we compare the B sections, we see that in the first half of the story Israel is weakened in battle (see the last phrase in verse 11). In the second half of the story, Amalek is weakened in battle.
3. The second half of the story _____ opposes _____ agrees with _____ the first half. (Circle the right word)

s3soddo

4. The **central axis** appears to be the most important unimportant event since it changes the direction of flow from one half of the story to the next. **(Circle the right word)**

B. Comparing and Contrasting what happened on the Mountain and on the Battlefield

1. Something is going on in two places — on the mountain and on the battlefield. When we compare and contrast events happening at the same time on the mountain with those on the battlefield, we will see right away that the word **Amalek** is used seven times in the battlefield passages. The word **hand** appears seven times in the mountain passages. Through this parallel, the Torah wants us to see that **what happened on the battlefield was directly influenced by what happened on the mountain.**

ON THE MOUNTAIN = Hand



ON THE BATTLEFIELD = Amalek



C. These contrasts are not by chance. Through thematic analysis of the structure of this story, we have uncovered two things:

· Because the two halves of the story "oppose" one another, they point us to the importance of the **central axis** (verse 12). Write in the central axis:

· A close look at what is happening on the

b _____ and on the
battlefield

m _____ teaches us that Israel's
mountain

battle against Amalek (*in the natural*) is directly connected to what is happening on the mountain

top.

II. The Importance of the Words Used in This Parsha — It is not by chance that the words **Amalek** and **hand** both appear seven times. Whenever the Torah uses certain words an equal number of times it is usually trying to reveal a message. The message will be uncovered by understanding the usage of the words that appear the same number of times. So, it's important to understand their usage in this story.

A. How is it significant that the word Amalek is used seven times in the story?

What did Amalek do to deserve a judgment from Adonai that would go on and on through all their generations?

To answer these questions, we need to understand the principle of **here a little, there a little**. Read Isaiah 28:9-13. Remember, the Torah records information here a little, there a little. If we search 3

the Scriptures for other passages that mention Amalek, we should be able to uncover important thematic parallels.

1. Let's look at some Scriptures that shed more light on the battle with Amalek?

Read Deuteronomy 25:17-18 — Remember what _____ did to you on your journey when you left Egypt—for he surprised you and cut down all the stragglers in your rear, while you were famished and weary.

Torah says that Amalek used unfair and sneaky practices in warfare because they attacked the weak stragglers, probably older people, women and children.

Let's look at another Scripture thematically related to Amalek (in battle)

Read I Samuel 30:1-3 — And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; and had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way. So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives.

Here, once again, we read of _____ engaging in unfair and sneaky forms of warfare, taking women and children. This is a perfect example of how a theme will carry throughout the Scriptures.

a. It is not by chance that these two accounts, although separated in time by hundreds of years, both have the same theme (unfair and sneaky practices in warfare) concerning Amalek.

2. Did you notice, in the Exodus account, _____ attacked Israel for no cause.

3. Consider the facts below. Draw a line to connect the facts

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) Israel had just left Egypt and they were on their way to Canaan | 2) Since Amalek lived on the southern border of Canaan, Israel would have to go into battle with them at some time. |
| 2) The Amalekites dwelled on the southern portion of Canaan [Read Numbers 13:28-29], why do you think that there was an attack on Israel by Amalek? | 1) The purpose for creating the nation of Israel in Canaan was to be a light to all the nations pointing them to the One true God |

The Amalekites traveled a good distance to make a pre-emptive strike to stop Adonai's plan that Israel become a great nation in the land of Canaan. This was a direct attempt to stop the eternal plan Adonai has in store for Israel.

B. What is the importance of the word hand used seven times in this story?

1. How was Moses' hand significant in this story?

It was the raising of his h _____ that secured v _____.

Are there any other thematic connections that you can think of in this weeks' Parashat that would help us understand the importance of Moses' outstretched hand?

Yes, it was when Moses stretched out his h hand that the R S Red Sea parted!

2. A better translation of verse 16 is...

For the hand is on the throne of God: YHVH maintains a war against Amalek, from **generation to generation**.

From the Stone Edition of Chumash, From Artscroll.

Which hand is Moses talking about in verse 14?

Since the hand is said to be **on the throne of God**, it's probably a reference to the h puuq of Adonai.

Even though the word hand referred to Moses' hand, in the verses before, this verse seems to tell us that the hand of real importance is Adonai's. In Exodus 14:31, it says that the defeat of the Egyptian army was by the hand of God. We know that Moses lifted his hands to part the Red Sea. What then is the message of Moses lifting his hands in the battle against Amalek? It seems as if the Torah is trying to teach us that although the battle against Amalek was won by Moses lifting his hands, he is only **a picture of the real hand behind the scene, Adonai's hand**.

C A look at the three men who ascended the hill. Draw a line to make match

- | | |
|---|---------|
| 1. What leadership role is Moses working in at this time? | Priest |
| 2. What leadership role will Aaron eventually fulfill? | Judah |
| 3. What tribe was Hur from? | Prophet |



What is the role of the tribe of Judah — See Genesis 49:8-12?

4. What is the importance of these three leadership roles?

These are the three L Leadership roles Adonai will appoint for the nation.

The Torah uses these three people to teach us about the importance of their roles in securing victory for the nation.

5. What was Moses doing on the hill? Although he was lifting his hands, his activity was p prayer

What were Aaron and Hur doing? They were helping to h Hold up u Moses' hands.

Now, what was the real importance of Aaron and Hur holding up Moses' hands? They were assisting Him in **intercession** (a prayer on behalf of another).

To wrap it up, the story of the battle with Amalek teaches us these lessons. The nation of Israel has been delivered from Egypt; new battles loom on the horizon because soon they will need to conquer the land of Canaan. These battles will be won or lost depending on whether or not the leadership of Israel will seek Adonai's face. If they succeed in seeking His face, His hand will be at work behind the scenes to secure victory for them over their enemies.